

LUCIEN GOLDMANN

IS THERE A MARXIST SOCIOLOGY?

Translated and Introduced by Ian Birchall

When Lucien Goldmann's essay 'Is There a Marxist Sociology?' first appeared in *Les Temps Modernes* in 1957, it made an important contribution to the revival of a serious consideration of the Marxist method. The scientific deformation of Marxism, emanating from Moscow, was beginning to wear thin, and had been proving an ideal Aunt Sally for a horde of hack scholars determined to 'refute' Marxism. At the same time, in both Eastern and Western Europe, various versions of 'ethical' and 'humanistic' Marxisms were being developed by those who wanted to break with the brutalities of the Stalin era without having to find a scientific explanation of why they happened. Goldmann's stress on the concept of 'totality' as central to dialectical thinking cuts through the false dichotomies of fact and value, science and ethics, ends and means, etc.

Goldmann, whose premature death at the age of fifty-seven in 1970 was a serious loss to Marxist scholarship, will be remembered for two things. Firstly, he played a major part in reviving the early literary and philosophical works of the Hungarian Marxist George Lukacs - *The Soul and the Forms*, *The Theory of the Novel*, and *History and Class Consciousness* - which had been suppressed by the Stalinist bureaucracy, and renounced by Lukacs himself.

Secondly, in his major literary studies, Goldmann made a positive and original application of Lukacs' method, which in Lukacs' early works often suffers from extreme obscurity of expression. Goldmann takes from Lukacs a fundamental concern with the unity of form and content, insisting on taking the work as a totality, and not making a surgical extraction of

the socially relevant, like so many practitioners of the 'sociology of literature'.

Moreover, since Goldmann's active political commitment was limited to taking stands on particular issues, he did not suffer from inhibitions of the later Lukacs, and was able to make useful analyses of such 'modernist' literary trends as the French *nouveau roman*.

Goldmann's *Philosophy and Human Sciences* is still a valuable counter-manual for anyone exposed to bourgeois social science. Yet Goldmann, for all his concern with 'totality', does not follow Lukacs in what was the fundamental proposition of *History and Class Consciousness*: "For when confronted by the overwhelming resources of knowledge, culture and routine which the bourgeoisie undoubtedly possesses and will continue to possess as long as it remains the ruling class, the only effective superiority of the proletariat, its only decisive weapon is its ability to see the social totality as a concrete historical totality." (Merlin, 1971, p.197) It is Goldmann's denial of the revolutionary capacity of the working class, his attempt to divorce Marxism from proletariat and to justify it in terms of its own 'comprehensiveness', that makes much of Goldmann's writing, especially the essays posthumously collected in *Marxisme et Sciences Humaines* (Gallimard, 1970), so disappointingly reformist and complacent. In the last resort his Marxism is a brilliant tool for interpreting the world, but not for changing it.

Ian H. Birchall.
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In a recent book¹ Mr. Maximilien Rubel puts forward the thesis that in Marx's work there is a duality between an objective and 'scientific' 'sociology' on the one hand and a revolutionary ethic on the other.

The problem of the existence of a Marxist 'ethic' and a Marxist 'sociology,' or, in more general terms the problems of the relation between judgments of fact and judgments of value, in dialectical thought in general, and in Marx's work in particular, is far from being a new one. It was the object of a long and searching discussion in Marxist theory between the years 1904 and 1930; a discussion involving the principal theoreticians of the various tendencies, notably Karl Vorlander,² Karl Kautsky, Max Adler³ and Georg Lukacs; a discussion carried on in numerous articles and many works of a very high scientific level.

The reader will excuse us if, in approaching this particularly difficult problem in the history of dialectical thought, we start off with these works, which, although old, are serious and documented, rather than with Mr. Rubel's book, which does not even mention all of them, although it takes up their themes - unfortunately on a lower level.⁴

To understand the origins of this discussion, we must first of all place it in the context of Marxist thought at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth.

The fact is that Marx, continuing classical philosophy,

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Notes followed by the indication (LG) are Goldmann's original notes; the others have been added by the translator.

1. Maximilien Rubel: *Karl Marx. Essai de biographie intellectuelle*, Paris, Marcel Riviere, 1957. (LG)
2. Karl Vorlander (1860-1928). German neo-Kantian philosopher, author of *Kant und Marx*, Tübingen, 1926.
3. Max Adler (1873-1937), leading theorist of the Austro-Marxist school.
4. Obviously we are confining ourselves here to a schematic outline, reduced to the strict minimum necessary to approach the problem, and we shall not mention all the many authors who have directly or incidentally dealt with this subject. (LG)

and notably Hegelian thought, had inextricably united in his work statements of fact and judgments of value, and in particular had shown, from the *Communist Manifesto* right up to his final works, that he was irrevocably opposed to any attempt to base socialism on any kind of ethical values.

However, Western non-socialist thought in the second half of the nineteenth century was characterised by a break with the dialectical tradition, and the progressive triumph of historicism⁵ and of scientism.⁶ Thus academic philosophy at the end of the nineteenth century had come back to the idea of a radical division between judgments of fact (sciences) and judgments of value (social engineering or ethics). In Germany, this position was presented for the most part as a 'return to Kant' (neo-Kantianism, which was in reality a return to Fichte⁷). In France, Poincaré⁸ expressed it in a phrase destined to become famous, saying that from premises in the indicative mood one could never draw a conclusion in the imperative mood.

Since there was no watertight division between academic thought and socialist thought, and since, moreover, this evolution was the expression of a general stabilisation of Western societies which also impinged on the working-class movement, this conception rapidly became dominant among the main theoreticians of so-called orthodox Marxism (Kautsky, Plekhanov, etc), who transformed the dialectical concept of 'scientific socialism' into a scientific concept of science

5. For want of a better word, we shall use this term, which we know to be quite inadequate, to indicate alongside of the positions of scientism - explicative or empirical - the whole set of comprehensive positions, which admit that we can understand human realities only in the total historical context of an age or civilisation - a context implying ends and values - but refuses to join with these theoretical analyses, the historian's own values and thus still claims to remain on an objective level. The common feature of these positions is a comprehensive relativism, summed up in a famous phrase of Ranke's: every age is equally close to the divinity. (LG)
6. The French scientisme and scientiste are rendered 'scientism' and 'scientistic,' in the sense of application to human phenomena of the methods of natural science.
7. Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814); German idealist and nationalist philosopher, influenced by Kant.
8. Henri Poincaré (1854-1912); great French mathematician, who in later years turned to philosophy of science.

'in the indicative mood,' which was objective and foreign to any value judgment. Moreover, since on the one hand they were leaders of socialist movements, and on the other hand, they believed and desired themselves to be faithful to the thought of Marx, and thus implicitly to Marx's notorious hostility to any 'ethical' socialism, they conceived of the action implied by Marx's works and by any taking of a socialist position, on the model of a social technology, based on an objective science of society, in the same way as a technology proper was based on the objective sciences of nature. For them, this social technology constituted socialist politics.

The situation is clear: 'orthodox' Marxism, like academic thought, upheld the existence of an objective science of history and society, and merely called for active intervention of a political kind into social life; such intervention was based on this selfsame science, and was intended to accelerate an evolution which was inevitable in itself. The dispute between Marxist thinkers and academic philosophers was not over the nature of objectivity in the social and historical sciences - on this all were in agreement - but on the practical complement of these sciences, a complement which according to the orthodox Marxists was to be of a political nature, but according to the many academic thinkers, notably the neo-Kantians, of an ethical nature.

Now in this situation, the position of the 'orthodox' Marxists was difficult to defend. For obviously Marx's work contained something quite different from a collection of 'political recipes' conceived on the model of technology. One need read only a few pages to find oneself faced with a militant humanism, conferring value on man, which the 'orthodox' positions found it difficult to account for, at least on the theoretical level. It was therefore easy to foresee the imminent appearance of a neo-Kantian interpretation of Marxism. And it came - after Cohen,⁹ Natorp¹⁰ and other academic neo-Kantians had taken up a position in favour of an ethical socialism - with Karl Vorlander's lecture 'Kant and Marx' in 1904. Developing a position he was to defend in several works right up to the end of his life, Vorlander, who was both an academic and a socialist militant, affirmed that socialism could not be deduced either from an 'objective' science foreign to any value judgment, nor from a political technique, for which it, indeed, had to provide the basis. So he maintained, as Mr Rubel does today, that any socialism, and thus implicitly Marx's socialism, necessarily had an ethical character. Nonetheless, as a serious philosophical thinker knowing thoroughly the works of Marx, Vorlander opts immediately for one of the three versions between which Mr Rubel is perpetually oscillating. For him Karl Marx's socialist ethics were implicit and involuntary.

To illustrate his positions we will take the liberty of quoting a long passage from his lecture of 1904, the substance of which will be found unchanged in the author's later works:

'At first sight the socialism of Marx and Engels seems totally indifferent and even hostile to the ethical viewpoint. But even if it were not true of Marx, as I was told by someone who knew him personally, that he burst out laughing every time anyone spoke to him of morality, it is still true that the foundations of their socialism were deliberately - please excuse the disrespectful expression - stripped of all moralising. The Communist Manifesto openly declares, for example, that laws, morality and religion are merely bourgeois prejudices behind which are hidden so many bourgeois interests. The theoretical affirmations of socialists are not based, we are told, on ideas invoked or discovered by some thinker who wants to improve the world, but simply the general expression of real social relations, of a class struggle which really exists. Not only his polemic against Proudhon, but also a note in Capital, is ironic at the expense of the idea of eternal justice," and any reader of Capital or the other great fundamental theoretical work of scientific socialism, Engels' Anti-Duhring, knows with what conscious deliberation they both excluded ethical points of view from their deductions.

'How can we explain this curious repulsion against ethical idealism, from which socialism in fact draws its greatest strength? Well, it can easily be understood from the historical and psychological point of view....'

And after having analysed these historical and psychological reasons (hostility to the speculative idealism of Kant, Fichte and Hegel, the struggle against 'true socialism,'¹¹ etc), Vorlander continues:

9. Herman Cohen (1842-1918); German neo-Kantian philosopher, founder of the 'Marburg' school; his pupils were among the revisionist wing of social-democracy.

10. Paul Natorp (1854-1924); German neo-Kantian philosopher.

11. 'True Socialism,' prevalent among German petty-bourgeois literati before 1848; of Communist Manifesto III-1-c.

'And yet nonetheless a deeper ethical thought was implied in a latent fashion in this very apparent hostility to ethics and idealism. Socialism cannot free itself from ethics historically or logically, neither on the theoretical level nor in fact. My time being limited, I must give up the attempt to show you how the young Marx and Engels were obviously impelled by ethical motives to shift from their radical bourgeois positions to communist positions. And abundant proof of this can be found in the works of Dr. Woltmann¹² and Professor Masaryk,¹³ and above all in the early writing of Marx and Engels just published by Mehring. But even in the works where they are both making their main attack on "true or philosophical" socialism such as the Communist Manifesto, or in an almost entirely economic work such as Capital, which has as its explicit intention purely to "reveal the economic law of development of modern society," they cannot avoid ethics. The Manifesto, for example, operates by means of a series of ethical expressions such as "oppressors and oppressed," "shameless exploitation," etc. It reproaches the bourgeoisie for having "resolved personal worth into exchange value," for "having drowned it in the icy water of egotistical calculation," for having created an "unscrupulous" freedom of trade; and it ends up by setting up the already mentioned ideal of a free "association." In Capital, ethical terms are, admittedly, relatively less frequent, but they are still there. Already in the introduction we find a "bad" situation, "exploitation," the "furies of private interest," the "more brutal or more humane forms" of the class struggle. And if we read the famous chapters on the misery in England after the industrial revolution, we, like Woltmann, will speak on an "ethical" point of view in Capital, which, admittedly, does not adopt the language of the preacher, but rather that of irony, satire and sarcasm, stemming from a deeply suffering heart' (Vorlander, Kant and Marx, pp 22-23).

But if Woltmann and Masaryk, quoted by Vorlander, like Cohen, Natorp, etc, had little effect in socialist circles, Vorlander himself had a rapid success. Soon he was able to publish a triumphant balance-sheet, showing that the idea of ethical socialism was tending to become the philosophical position of the reformist wing of the parties of the Second International.

So the 'orthodox' Marxists were obliged to reply. There were, of course, a number of articles directed against Vorlander, but the principal reply was a pamphlet by Karl Kautsky, *Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History* (Berlin, 1906), which was destined to be for a long time a sort of 'orthodox' breviary on the controversial point.

The fact that the principal reply to neo-Kantianism came from Kautsky is obviously no coincidence. Most of the theorists of 'orthodox' Marxism at this time, notably Plekhanov, were of a more or less Spinozan tendency, and at all events were rigorous determinists (we must remember that Marx was not a determinist - see in particular the Third Thesis on Feuerbach, quoted below); as a result, they were particularly defenceless in face of the objections of Vorlander and the neo-Kantians in general. Denying any final ends in history and social life, they obviously had difficulty in placing the 'ultimate ends' of historical evolution anywhere other than in the ethics of individual consciences; and if they still declined to do this, it was out of loyalty to the thought of Marx, notoriously hostile to any idea of ethical socialism, and from a political instinct, rather than in the name of a coherent theoretical position. Kautsky, on the other hand, was one of the rare theoreticians of 'orthodox' Marxism, who, having always tried to establish a synthesis between Marxism and Darwinism, had retained the idea of an immanent finality in the organic and historical world, and by this very fact was apparently able to defend himself better against the criticisms of the neo-Kantians.

The philosophical pivot of his text is the sentence in which, speaking of the organic world, he writes:

'If we consider the organic world, it presents above all one characteristic in opposition to the inorganic world - finality.' (p 45)

In reality, this highly questionable synthesis of Marxism and Darwinism, which met the most serious reservations from other Marxist theoreticians, did not give Kautsky any superiority at all in face of the neo-Kantian arguments. An objective science, whether determinist or finalist, does not allow any conclusions in the imperative. The argument of Poincaré, which

12. Ludwig Woltmann (1871-1907); German doctor - developed from socialism to Social Darwinism and ended up a disciple of Gobineau's racism.

13. Thomas Masaryk (1850-1937); Czech sociologist, later Czech President (1918-1935), father of Jan Masaryk, Czech minister who committed suicide in 1948.

already existed when Vorlander began to formulate his criticism, remained irrefutable. The fact that historical evolution is necessarily oriented towards socialism in no way provides an obligation for any particular person to accelerate that evolution, or even merely to approve it. Thus it is no surprise that at the end of Kautsky's pamphlet we find a passage which in fact reaches the same position as Vorlander:

'Nor can the social-democratic organisation of the proletariat, in its class struggle, do without the moral ideal, without ethical indignation against exploitation and class oppression. But this ideal has nothing to do with scientific socialism, the scientific study of the laws of evolution of the social organism in order to know the trends and the necessary ends of the proletarian class struggle. It is true that in the case of a socialist, the thinker is also a militant, and no man can be artificially cut in two parts of which one has nothing to do with the other; so sometimes even in Marx's scientific research we perceive a moral ideal. But he always, correctly, tried to exclude it as far as possible. For in science, the moral idea becomes a source of errors, if it attempts to prescribe the ends of science' (p 141).

Of course this is an isolated passage in a text directed entirely against neo-Kantianism and ethical socialism, and Kautsky was certainly sincere in his convictions. It is nonetheless true that by recognising the existence of a 'confusion' between ethical judgments and judgments of fact in Marx, and even by admitting that this confusion was inevitable for any socialist militant, he implicitly recognised the superiority, at least the intellectual superiority, of the neo-Kantian positions on the essential point of the debate.

We should, however, add that this theoretical superiority of the ethical positions of Vorlander over the scientism of Kautsky and Plekhanov has only nowadays become apparent, while at the time the two positions very rapidly became the philosophical expressions of two ideological and political currents, in the following way:

Explicit reformism was for a long time to base itself, and to some extent still bases itself, on an ethical socialism, although for some time it has usually abandoned any attempt to give a philosophical foundation to its politics, and in particular to relate it in any way to Marx's thought.

Inversely, scientific and anti-ethical 'Marxism' - the conception of socialist politics as a social technique founded on an objective science - was for a very long time the philosophical basis of the apparently revolutionary but in fact reformist attitude of the orthodox, or 'centrist' wing of the parties of the Second International; moreover, in our own day, it has been taken up, on a much lower theoretical level, by the apparently revolutionary but in fact defensive and conservative tendency of Stalinism.

But in between these two positions and their respective theoreticians, there was in Marxist thought during the period 1904-1939 a third intermediary current known on the theoretical level as Austro-Marxism, and on the political level under the highly expressive nick-name of the Two-and-a-Half International!¹⁴ This movement could be compared - making all necessary reservations, and stressing that this comparison is formulated here only to assist the understanding of the contemporary reader - to the present day independent left, embracing under this title the whole range from *L'Observateur* to *L'Express* and from *Les Temps Modernes* to *L'Esprit*,¹⁵ with however, the difference, due to a set of particular circumstances which we cannot elaborate, that this movement became in one country, Austria, the ideology of a significant part of the working class, a fact expressed by the existence of the Austrian Socialist Party and the particular place taken up by it within the Second International. From the intellectual point of view, what concerns us here is the fact that Austro-Marxism produced a whole group of theoreticians who were among the most brilliant socialist thinkers up to the second world war, notably the economist Rudolf

Hilferding,¹⁶ author of *Finance Capital* and Minister of Finance in the Weimar Republic, the jurist Karl Renner,¹⁷ first president of the Austrian Republic after the last war, the militant and theoretician Otto Bauer,¹⁸ and finally the philosopher, Max Adler.¹⁹

The last named, a writer and thinker of the highest level, devoted an important part of his work to the problems of the relations between the thought of Kant and Marx, and left numerous books, which by their form as well as their content, exercised a wide influence on several generations of young socialists in Central Europe.

In comparison with the positions of Vorlander, Kautsky and Plekhanov, we could characterise Max Adler's thought as a position of synthesis, adding however that it was much more coherent than theirs. Like all of them, he believed in the radical separation of judgments of fact and judgments of value. Together with Vorlander and various other ethical socialists, he admitted the existence of a relationship between the thought of Kant and that of Marx, and also the fact that, in the individual minds of militants, socialism takes on the aspect of an ethical value; like Plekhanov but unlike Kautsky, he rejected any final ends in social and historical life, and compared Marx's philosophical positions to those of Spinoza; like Plekhanov, Kautsky and the 'orthodox Marxists,' he categorically rejected any ethical foundation to socialism.

Adler thus came to an original conclusion, and, it must be admitted, one which was the most satisfactory of all those elaborated on the basis of a separation between theory and practice, between judgments of fact and judgments of value.

For him, and this is one of his principal ideas, Marx was a sociologist, and, moreover, the founder of sociology. Marx's work was above all a sociological work.

'According to the Marxist conception, socialism will be achieved, not because it is justified from an ethical point of view, but because it will be the result of a causal process. The fact that the product of causality is also justified from an ethical point of view is in no way secondary, and for a Marxist is not an accident. But this convergence of the causal necessities of evolution with the ethical justification is a sociological problem. Within Marxist thought this problem can be resolved only in a causal manner.'

'Following H. Cohen, a large number of thinkers - I would particularly name Stammler,²⁰ Natorp, Staudinger²¹ and Vorlander - right up to the present time, have found the connection between Marx and Kant in the idea that socialism must be complemented by an ethical justification of its ends such as is given in the practical philosophy of Kant.'

'Such a fashion of establishing the agreement must, however, be energetically repudiated, and precisely from a Marxist point of view. Marxism is a system of sociological knowledge. It bases socialism on the causal knowledge of the processes of social life. Marxism and sociology are one and the same thing.' (Max Adler: *Kant and Marxism*, Berlin, p.141).

It is Marx, and not, as is usually believed, Auguste Comte, who is the true founder of sociology.

'While the development of Comte's positivism was

14. The two are not identical, but the independent left-wing socialism indicated - in common language and by a more or less legitimate extension of the term - by the name Two-and-a-Half International found an important theoretical expression only in Austro-Marxism. The term itself had first of all been used to refer to the Union of Socialist Parties for International Action, founded in Vienna after the first World War. (LG)
15. *L'Observateur* (later *France-Observateur*, *Nouvel Observateur*), weekly run by Gilles Martinet and Claude Bourdet - PSU orientation; *L'Express*, weekly, editor J-J Servan-Schreiber; increasingly less left, more like *Time* in style; *Les Temps Modernes*, political and literary review, directed by Sartre; *Esprit*, review, founded 1932 by Emmanuel Mounier. An English parallel would be: from the *New Statesman* to *New Left Review*.

16. Rudolf Hilferding (1879-1944).
17. Karl Renner (1870-1950); of the Austro-Marxists the most sympathetic to gradualism.
18. Otto Bauer (1881-1938); Austrian Foreign Minister 1918-1919, exiled 1934; see also T. Cliff, 'The End of Deutscher's Road,' IS 15.
19. Admittedly Hilferding and Renner ended up by integrating themselves with the reformist State bureaucracy, whereas Bauer and, above all, Adler stuck to the original positions of Austro-Marxism. But here too we must beware of oversimplification. Right up to the end, we can recognise in Hilferding and Renner their Austro-Marxist origins. A serious study of reformist thought in German social-democracy before 1933 would probably come to distinguish several groups of theoreticians - among them the former Austro-Marxists, the former 'centrists,' the new bureaucracy, and - scarcely integrated into the party machine - the ethical socialists (Vorlander, Bernstein, etc), who are, in reality, bourgeois liberals led by their convictions to turn to socialism. (LG)
20. Rudolf Stammler (1856-1938); German neo-Kantian philosopher and jurist.
21. F. Staudinger; neo-Kantian philosopher, writing in Germany in the 1890s.

more or less contemporary with that of Marx's thought, with Comte, sociology remained a programme rather than a fully elaborated science. Comte's thought still affects us through the great idea of a positivist conception of the spiritual life of humanity, that is, through the idea that by causal laws we can also grasp social nature, just as for a long time it has been admitted we can grasp physical nature. But beyond this methodological point of view, he had nothing to contribute to the realisation of this programme, and his practical attitude never went beyond a mere glorification of the value and importance of science for politics.' (Max Adler, *The Thought of Marx*, pp 89-90.)

'It is only in Marxism that politics really becomes what its name affirms, an art in the Greek sense of the word, that is, competent and adequate action on the evolution of social and State life, in a word, social technology' (*idem*, p 108).

As far as the relations between Kant and Marx are concerned, Max Adler elaborated quite an original theory, making the Kantian *a priori*, as it were, a first discovery of the collective consciousness, and Kant himself into the creator of the first epistemological elements that made sociology possible. Marx thus finds himself place in the direct continuation of a line going from Kant, who discovers the existence of social consciousness, to Fichte, who introduces the idea of action, and to Hegel, who makes this social consciousness historical and poses the problems of the laws governing its dynamics. The sociology of Marx becomes for Max Adler the culmination of classical German philosophy. We can see the superiority of his position in comparison to those already developed by other Marxist thinkers.

In comparison to Vorlander, Adler remained within the limits of orthodoxy, rejecting any attempt to complement Marx's thought with that of Kant, while at the same time making Marx - as he was, without any attempt to revise him - the culmination of an evolution inaugurated by Kantian philosophy. In comparison with Kautsky, he rejected any mixture of Darwinism and Marxism, preserving the purely historical and social character of the latter, while refusing, like Kautsky and Marx himself, any attempt to found socialism on ethical values, and moreover, apparently taking a more orthodox position than Kautsky, for he rejected any kind of finalism.

In comparison with Plekhanov, who at this time, together with Kautsky, was recognised as the principal theoretician of orthodox Marxism, Max Adler seemed to accept in a rigorous manner the comparison, upheld by the latter, between Spinoza and Marxism, and like him rejected any idea of finality; nonetheless, he had a better understanding of ethical reality, for, he explained, social determinism was operative precisely through collective consciousness, which alone transformed biological realities into social facts, and for the individual, took on the aspect of will and the ethical norm.²²

It is understandable that Kautsky and Plekhanov remained, for many years for most militants, the great 'orthodox' theoreticians, thanks to their hostility to any attempt to complement Marx's thought with that of any other philosopher, notably Kant; but on the other hand, Max Adler's theory seemed to offer most satisfaction to intellectuals concerned to understand the problems themselves, and who more or less clearly perceived the inextricable difficulties of the orthodox positions in face of the offensive of neo-Kantian socialism.

We can also appreciate the authority enjoyed by Max Adler, and the growing influence of his thought on young socialist intellectuals.

To sum up, what characterises these three fundamental positions (despite their differences, we are classing together Kautsky and Plekhanov) is that they all hold that Marxism

implies an objective science distinct and separable from any value judgment, what might be called, to use Poincaré's terminology, a 'science in the indicative mood.' On this point, the different trends of Marxist philosophy merely follow the scientism which characterised academic thought at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, by that very fact diverging from the dialectical tradition of the classical German thought of Kant, Hegel and Marx. The differences between these three positions consist in the fact that Vorlander, and with him a large number of thinkers who are partisans of explicit reformism, affirm correctly with Poincaré, that from a science in the indicative mood one can never derive any conclusion in the imperative mood, and thus there could be no 'scientific socialism,' since any taking up of a socialist position necessarily has an ethical basis. This position very rapidly became the ideology of a certain explicit reformist trend consisting primarily of some bourgeois democrats brought to socialism by taking seriously the demand for individual freedom for all men.

The 'orthodox' positions (Plekhanov, Kautsky, etc, up to the modern Stalinists) categorically oppose any attempt to give socialism an ethical foundation, for to them it seems a kind of reactionary deception and phraseology; in this, they continue the attitude already adopted by Marx and Engels themselves. To the ethical conceptions of the reformists, they oppose a political conception of historical action, which comprehends the latter as a sort of social technology, without, however, clearly realising that no practical attitude, whether political or ethical, can be derived from a science in the indicative mood. Such a science can, like the natural sciences, indicate the most effective means to achieve a certain end; it could never indicate the ends themselves. Basically - whether it is a question of a Darwinian conception implying a certain finalism, as in Kautsky, or of a Spinozan and rigorously deterministic conception, as with Plekhanov - on the most important level these positions had, in fact, yielded ground before the neo-Kantian attacks, so that we have in Kautsky, albeit in a more veiled form than in Vorlander, the affirmation, quoted above, of the existence of confusion, of judgments of fact and judgments of value in Marx.

Taken up again in our day by the Stalinists, this position appears to us to develop among the bureaucratic machines of working-class parties every time that, in order to win the masses, these bureaucracies claim to be explicitly revolutionary when in reality they no longer are. One might, with a certain lack of precision necessary in an article for a journal, characterise it as the conception of the 'managerial' sections in the working-class movement. We may add that this analysis comes from Marx himself who expressed it in a famous text: the Third Thesis on Feuerbach.²³

Finally, the third position, that of Max Adler, very widespread in intellectual circles, and finding its political reality in the social-democratic left (Austro-Marxism and the journal *Klassenkampf* [Class Struggle] in Germany), on the one hand held a Spinozan and rigorously determinist conception of social life and saw in Marx, not just a sociologist, but the creator of scientific sociology; on the other hand, it intended to complement this sociology by an attitude which was both ethical and political, of which the final ends would have an objective character for the scholar, an ethical and political character for the man of action (the 'two faces' of events), so that Marxist sociology would provide the knowledge of the most effective means to achieve - thanks to a politics which is a social technology - these ends which are simultaneously objective (for the theoreticians) and political and ethical (for the militant).

It was at this stage in the discussion that there appeared in 1923 the work by Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*,²⁴ which has since become a classic. This work, reverting to the dialectical tradition of Hegel and Marx, made a direct attack on the premise common to all the positions which we have listed, namely, the existence of an objective Marxist sociology and the legitimacy of a separation between judgments of fact and judgments of value.

Lukács showed that if one accepted the idea of an

22. 'The consciousness of ends now appears solely as a psychic form through which causality unfolds in a particular sphere of being which is characterised as social being by its collective (gattungsmässig) consciousness. Thus the world as action - life and human action - is grasped in all its potent richness without being degraded to a mere semblance of liberty or diluted to the illusion of self-consciousness. It can be understood only as the obverse side of causal necessity, of which the aspect involving events belongs to theoretical study and the side involving will to immediate experience - and both of them simultaneously. It is by this kind of thought, which, since Spinoza, tends more and more to a total expression, and for which Marx, after the enormous impulse given by Hegel, gained admission into the whole sphere of social life, with a rare force of social understanding, that we can resolve the fundamental problem of social theory, a problem which still creates difficulties even for modern thinkers, and sometimes leads them into error; the problem of the relations between individual liberty and historical necessity.' (M Adler, *The Thought of Marx*, Berlin, p 77.) (LG)

23. 'The materialist doctrine that men are products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men that change circumstances and that the educator himself needs educating. Hence, this doctrine necessarily arrives at dividing society into two parts, one of which is superior to society. The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity can be conceived and rationally understood only as revolutionary practice.' (we quote the text made explicit and published by Engels, the more compact version by Marx saying exactly the same thing.) (LG)

24. Lukács, *Histoire et Conscience de Classe*, (French translation) Les Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1960. Two extracts were published in English in IS 24 and 25.

objective science in the indicative mood, action could no longer be conceived except in terms of ethics or social technology; inversely, if one began with a conception of historical action as individual action, one could conceive it only in ethical or technical terms, and sooner or later, if one developed one's thought consistently, one would arrive at the idea of an objective science of society. But it is precisely all these complementary concepts - sociology science of social life, technical or ethical action - which seemed to him questionable and above all undialectical.

For him, what characterises historical action, is precisely the fact that it is not carried out by isolated individuals, but by groups who simultaneously know and constitute history. Therefore neither the group nor the individual who is part of it can consider social and historical life from the outside, in an objective fashion. The knowledge of historical and social life is not science but consciousness although it must obviously strive towards the attainment of a rigour and precision comparable to those achieved in an objective fashion by the natural sciences. Any separation of judgments of fact and judgments of value, and, similarly, any separation of theory and practice is impossible in the process of understanding history; the very affirmation of such a separation will have an ideological and distorting effect. Historical knowledge is not a contemplative science; historical action is neither social technique (Machiavelli) nor ethical action (Kant); the two constitute an indivisible whole which is a progressive awareness and the march of humanity towards freedom.

The ethical conceptions of socialism, moreover, lead to a liberal ideology which subordinates the end to the means and the group to the individual; the conceptions of socialist action as social technology, conversely, subordinate the means to the end and the individual to the collective. The dialectical position of Lukacs, however, is characterised by its refusal of any subordination, of means to ends or of ends to means, of groups to individuals or of individuals to groups, etc. Ends, means, groups, individuals, parties, masses, etc. are for dialectical thought the constituent elements of a dynamic totality, within which the greatest necessity is to combat, in every concrete situation, the ever recurring danger of the primacy of one or other of them in relation to the others and to the whole.

This Lukacsian position restored to Marx's work its true internal coherence, and at one stroke got rid of all the so-called 'dualities,' 'inconsistencies,' 'confusions,' 'philosophical inadequacies,' etc. and so it seems to us the only possible starting point for a real rebirth of dialectical thought in all its strength and fertility.

We have published several works inspired by this viewpoint and which elaborate on it; so we do not need to dwell on it further here, but simply refer the reader to these works.²⁵ We need only mention that, in our view (and in this we go further than Lukacs, who was content to show that a consistent dialectical thought must necessarily refuse, even on the individual level, any conception of socialist action as ethical value or as social technology), on the level of individual consciousness, what corresponds to the dialectical conception of history is the immanent act of faith, and, in particular, the act of faith in the form of the wager. The history of Lukacs' book is well-known; it met the resistance of two bureaucracies - socialist and communist - and was suppressed only a few years after its appearance!

Soon after, the triumph of Stalinism was to put a stop to this discussion about the existence of a Marxist 'ethics' or 'sociology' just as it stopped all the other great theoretical discussions which were the pride and the very life of Marxism. In fact, since about 1930, a great wave of obscurantism has continued to spread over the working-class movement; on the one hand, the Stalinists replaced living thought by a scholasticism limited to quotations from the 'masters' and a servile interpretation of them; on the other hand, in the reformist camp, there was a progressive abandoning of any attempt to connect in any way with dialectical thought and Marx's work. It was only a few isolated thinkers here and there who, as free-lancers and against the stream, tried to continue a tradition which social and political evolution seemed to be condemning to oblivion.

We now come to Mr Rubel's book, which we shall analyse only from the point of view of its key idea, that of the existence of a so-called duality between 'sociology' and 'ethics' in Karl Marx's work.

Mr. Rubel, who takes the credit for having raised this problem in France where most of the works we have just mentioned are almost entirely unknown - takes up both Vorlander's idea of

an ethic which is supposed to be the basis of Marx's socialist ideal, and Max Adler's idea of the sociological character of Marxist thought. Moreover, he takes this position without any reference to the former discussion,²⁶ and without telling us how he intends to reconcile these two ideas. In fact, it is, of course, not by chance that Vorlander and the neo-Kantians said so little about Marxist sociology, while Max Adler limited ethics to an individual perspective without any historical scope. The idea of progress towards socialism is in fact for Marx both part of his theoretical construction, and of his scale of values, it is so to speak, together with the problem of the transformation of men by social conditions and of social conditions by men, one of the main touchstones by means of which we can judge whether his thought is monist or dualist. Thus, for those who accept a dualist interpretation, the problem is posed whether this idea should be placed on the ethical side - in which case they are led to deeply modify and question the whole theoretical structure of Marxist thought - or on the sociological side, as Max Adler did - in which case there remains for ethics only the sphere of individual consciousness which decides whether or not to ally itself with the objectively necessary historical evolution. Mr Rubel, however, does not seem to have noticed this problem; he simply proclaims that there is in Marx an 'ethics' and a 'sociology,' without ever attempting to delineate the scope of either of them.

Moreover, he does not seem to have any very precise idea of the nature of the relations between 'ethics' and 'sociology' in Marx's work. In fact, not only does he never define what he means by these words,²⁷ but, furthermore, he seems to oscillate on this point between at least three different positions:

- (a): Ethics and sociology in Marx's work are two autonomous and complementary elements.
- (b): They are implicitly and involuntarily confused (Vorlander's position).
- (c): An original position developed by Mr Rubel: Marx - for inexplicable reasons - is supposed to have created a conscious and deliberate confusion of these two heterogeneous elements.

We shall give our readers a single example of this perpetual oscillation. In the eight pages of the section entitled 'Sociology of Revolution,' in which Mr. Rubel, among many other things, approaches the key issue of the relations between the conditioning of men by the social environment, and the transformation of this environment by human activity - an insoluble problem for any determinist thought, and especially for sociological thought, as Marx himself stressed in the Third Thesis on Feuerbach - he points, as throughout his work, to the existence of a duality in Marx's thought. As to the nature of this duality, let us look at three passages of this same section:

(a) 'Sociological explanation and ethical reflection thus go on an equal footing, and together provide the basis for an operational theory of the causes, conditions and objectives of the modern social revolution. All the same, the causes and conditions of the revolution are not always clearly differentiated, and Marx himself knowingly (Goldmann's emphasis) confused them, having from the start taken on the double role of sociologist and revolutionary, of observer and actor. But the theoretical analysis of this position, though humanly it is intelligible and acceptable, cannot admit, on pain of being made sterile, this deliberate (Goldmann's emphasis) confusion of the necessary and the possible.' (p 216.)

There is thus supposed to be in Marx - and Mr Rubel repeats it elsewhere - a conscious and deliberate confusion of two theoretically incompatible positions.

(b): But two pages further on, Mr Rubel writes: 'Marx here envisages proletarian revolution

25. L. Goldmann: *Introduction à la Philosophie de Kant* (idees, nrf, 1967) (first published 1948); *Sciences Humaines et Philosophie* (Gonthier, 1966) (first published 1952); *The Hidden God* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964) (first published 1956).

26. On Vorlander, Mr Rubel simply says, in a note intended to show the fragmentary nature of all biographies of Karl Marx before his own, that he 'analyses the philosophical scope of Marxist thought' (p 7); on Max Adler, in another note, that at the time of the discussion about *State and Revolution* 'while recognising the merit of Lenin's writings, he nonetheless criticised its Blanquist tendency' (p 415). (LG)

27. It is true that in another work (*Pages choisies pour une éthique socialiste*, p xxvii) Mr Rubel writes 'The Marxist ethic is characterised negatively by its amorality, and positively by its essentially pragmatic approach.' It is difficult to know what this 'amoral' ethic is; if we understand aright, it is simply a question of opposing authentic ethics to 'moralising verbalism' - what Vorlander called 'moralising' - which is of course, evident but in no way affects the problem. (LG)

according to what one might call a monist (Goldmann's emphasis) view ... Now it is plain that the two component parts of these "material elements" established by Marx are not identical in nature ... We are inclined to believe that, if we stand on the ground of the operational method of sociological exploration which seems to have been adopted by Marx, there is reason to make a clear distinction between the sphere of the material structure, subject to truly scientific techniques of research and observation, and the sphere of human behaviour, subject to ethical criteria and judgments.²⁸

'Let us add that this distinction is not, we must recognise, explicitly established in Marx's work, but it is nonetheless certain that implicitly it derives from the whole career of one who was a partisan and a revolutionary.' (p 218)

Here we are back at Vorlander's position: Marx thought he was a monist, and, without wanting to and without being conscious of it, he combined in his work two heterogeneous elements which the theoretician - in this case Mr Rubel - must separate in the name of coherence.

(c): Finally, two pages further on, after a long quotation from the German Ideology, Mr Rubel concludes the section as follows:

'A harmonious blending of sociological themes and ethical postulates, this text, much earlier than Marx's main works, and somewhat before his taking up of a political career, contains the quintessence of his theoretical and political teaching and therefore the key to all his future scientific work.' (p 220.)

This time, the blend is 'harmonious,' and there is no longer any confusion, voluntary or involuntary.

Here also, Mr Rubel, while permanently oscillating between three interpretations which are certainly not easy to reconcile, does not even seem to suspect the existence of a problem.

On this subject, we must also point out a really surprising discovery. For Mr. Rubel has found one single text in which Marx is supposed himself to affirm the existence of a fundamentality and even a contradiction in his work. So he sees the proof that Marx is 'deliberately confusing' (and he stresses 'we say indeed deliberately') 'the scientific hypothesis and the ethical postulate,' and he thinks that this text can be seen, when closely examined, as the recognition of a 'fundamental ambiguity in his theoretical approach' (pp 435-436). We can understand why he devotes to it the last section of his book before the conclusion, under the title 'Ambiguity and Subjectivity.'

For Marx himself to affirm 'that his objective analysis refutes his own subjective fantasies,' that 'the way in which he presents, to himself or to others, the ultimate result of the present movement, of the present social process, has no connection with his real analysis,' would at the very least be a sensational discovery! What is it in fact? A letter from Marx to Engels, known since the first publication of their correspondence in 1913, in which he points out to his friend - in the context of their joint efforts to publicise Capital in the bourgeois press - what he might write in an article they were intending to have printed in a liberal paper as if written by an opponent of Marx's ideas. For any serious historian this simply proves that Marx knew the objections that could be made to him from a purely scientific point of view (to be later formulated by Cohen, Natorp, Rubel, etc), and that he regarded them as neither serious nor valid, but fit, as he wrote in the same letter, for a good joke, 'an amusing touch,' to trick an opponent. (Letter from Marx to Engels, 7 December 1867.) It would need all Mr Rubel's naivety to find in this an argument in favour of his own interpretation.

In fact, Mr Rubel's work is no more than a compilation of a large number of quotations from Marx, following each of

28. Let us note in passing the inexactness of a text which establishes an opposition within social life between 'the material structure subject to techniques of scientific observation' and the 'sphere of human behaviour' subject to ethics. Can one imagine for a single moment a 'science' of social life - whether, moreover, it be sociological or historical - which would eliminate the sphere of human behaviour from the field of its observation? It is true that a few lines earlier Mr Rubel contrasted 'material phenomena - productive forces and social intercourse - and truly human reactions' which 'do not derive from the same principle of causality.' But what is 'social intercourse' if not a 'truly human reaction'? Rubel's whole book is characterised by this lack of terminological accuracy which merely expresses the absence of conceptual rigour. (LG)

which he repeats untiringly and with no serious analysis: this is ethics, this is sociology, and sometimes, this is both at the same time. Statements and evaluations being indissolubly linked in Marx's work, one may say that in each of these comments, Mr Rubel is right and wrong at the same time. Right to the extent that there is in fact in Marx's text the statement or value judgment he sees there; wrong to the extent that the value judgment is never autonomous and independent of the analysis of facts, and thereby is not ethical, while the statements are never objective and free from any particular standpoint, and thereby are not sociological. Of course, by snatching a fragment out of context one can give the impression of a pure statement or a pure value judgment (in such a case, however, it would be enough to look at the preceding and following lines and pages to realise the distortion), but it is not always easy to do so, and Mr Rubel's comments and classifications are so accidental and gratuitous that he sometimes calls 'sociological' fragments in which the value judgment is as plain as a pikestaff, and on the other hand, he lists as 'ethical' passages or ideas in which the ethical element is minimal. We may mention two really surprising examples:

On page 95 of his book, Mr Rubel quotes the famous passage from the Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right.

'Religious distress is at the same time the expression of real distress and the protest against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people.'

And he adds the following comment:

'Contrary to a very widespread interpretation, this is a psycho-sociological analysis of the religious sentiment, rather than a proclamation of atheism. There is no condemnation pronounced on religion (Goldmann's emphasis) no moral judgment on the believer.'

Admittedly Mr. Rubel himself seems to have been aware of the rather surprising character of these lines for he immediately adds:

'Nonetheless, Marx blends with his analysis of a concrete situation a fundamental value judgment on the absurdity of a social order which makes possible, even inevitable, the religious alienation of man.' (p 96.)

All this is clearly false and indefensible. Marx condemns simultaneously the social order and the religion which is part of it. He does not 'blend' a judgment of value with an objective analysis, but, as throughout his work, makes a dialectical analysis in which understanding, explanation and evaluation are strictly inseparable.

At another point we learn (p 223, note), in the course of a discussion of a work by Duveau,²⁹ that 'the dichotomy of social classes and the theme of social catastrophe' are not, as Sorel thought, ideological themes, but 'rather ethical themes!' Evolution to catastrophe and above all the dichotomy of social classes as ethical themes! It would be difficult, it seems, to go further along the road of confusion.

We may add in passing that in a commentary - the whole of which is disputable - on the Theses on Feuerbach, the supreme monist dialectical text, in which Marx contrasts his absolute unity of thought and action with Feuerbach's empiricist and contemplative position, Mr Rubel goes so far as to comment on the Eighth Thesis (p 170) 'Social life is essentially practical. All mysteries which mislead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice,' in the following way:

'It is therefore by no means a question of rejecting the theoretical interpretation and explanation of social phenomena. Marx merely refuses to consider theory as an end in itself; the scientific rigour of any theory about society is confirmed all the more strongly if it is accompanied by a constant recourse to empirical observation.'

By substituting observation for practice, Mr Rubel thus comes to maintain that Marx is opposing to Feuerbach what in fact are Feuerbach's own positions. We leave it to the reader to draw his own conclusions.

To conclude, let us say a few words about Mr Rubel's intention in itself, and the way in which he conceives his 'intellectual biography.' At the beginning of his book he tells us that biographies before his own gave only 'fragmentary portraits,' and that the various researchers who have tried to

29. Georges Duveau (1903-1958); French historian, mainly concerned with social history of the nineteenth century.

grasp Marx's thought 'did not succeed in their intentions,' above all because they 'approached Marx onesidedly,' and deliberately 'isolated the economist, the philosopher, or the historian,' etc. Of course there is an element of truth in these remarks, since all scientific work is necessarily partial and needs to be complemented by the contribution of later researchers. But to our knowledge, no biography of Marx has previously had the idea, a ridiculous one to say the least, of radically separating the study of his thought from that of his political action. An 'intellectual' biography which speaks of 'the deep-rooted anarchism' of Marx (p 85), of his 'anarchist profession of faith,' (p 146), etc, but contains no mention of his struggle, in theory and practice, against Bakunin; a biography in which Marx is attributed with an ethical conception of socialism, but does not even mention the conflict with the German socialist leaders at the time of the Hochberg case, during which Marx and Engels resolutely took up a principled position against any collaboration with those who based socialism on morality; such divisions (which, however, derive naturally from Rubel's view which totally separates theory and practice) seem to us questionable in the biography of any thinker, but become purely and simply a distortion in the case of Marx, for whom thought was never separable from struggle and action.³⁰

30. Admittedly Mr Rubel writes (p 14) 'An examination of Marx's strictly political career would reveal these motivations even more clearly; however, we have deliberately excluded everything not immediately relevant to the subject in view. 'A second work will be devoted to this examination.' It is precisely this radical separation of the intellectual and practical which seems to us, from the methodological point of view, highly disputable. (LG)

We could add, in dealing with Mr Rubel's book, very many more criticisms of the same scope and kind. Obviously the dimensions of an article do not permit this.

Let us simply say that all this does not seem serious to us. Mr. Rubel has wasted a considerable effort in order to affirm, without proof, that Marx's thought is ambiguous, confused and contradictory, and in particular to write an 'intellectual biography' of Marx which scarcely touches on the real problems posed by a genetic study of Marxist thought. Doubtless he has read very many texts by Marx, but he did not possess the necessary philosophical, economic and political culture to bring to a successful conclusion the extremely complex and difficult task he had set himself. Further, he never discusses the works already in existence on the subjects he treats, being satisfied with sometimes indicating their key idea and passing value judgments on them (usually negative judgments in the case of Marxist works), which, however, he hardly ever tries to justify. By its dogmatism, its peremptory tone, the inadequacy of its conceptual equipment, Mr Rubel's book is simply the other side of the coin to the Stalinist works of recent years, for, despite its opposite positions, it shows just the same faults as the latter.

Thus the radical critique of works of this kind is an indispensable condition for a real rebirth of Marxist thought and the development of the scientific 'Marxology' which Mr Rubel, rightly, so keenly desires.

SANITY, MADNESS AND THE PROBLEM OF KNOWLEDGE

Trevor Pateman

The republication of R.D. Laing and A. Esterton's *Sanity Madness and the Family* as a paperback (Penguin Books, 1970) made me buy it and read it again. Despite myself, I re-read the book as a philosopher, but in the event this proved to be fruitful. It is a philosopher's reading of the first case study of the book, the study of the Abbott family, that I present in this article.

A glance at the Appendix to the chapter on the Abbotts (pp.49-50 of the Penguin edition) will show that many if not most of the statements made by the parents about the 'schizophrenic' daughter, Maya, and by Maya about herself are factual statements. For example, Maya says that she worried over examinations; the parents contradict this: she did not worry. In general, both parties make claims to knowledge - the daughter about herself and the parents about their daughter - but claims which contradict each other.

Most of the argument which Laing and Esterton transcribe from interviews with Maya and her family and reproduce in the chapter on the Abbotts is also about matters of fact. The dominant feature of these arguments is, in my reading, conflict over what is or was the fact of the matter. In this conflict, the feature of the 'schizophrenic' daughter, as evidenced in her statements, which I wish to single out is her inability either to state or, more radically, to know what is true and what is false in a given situation. I shall suggest as a possible explanation that this could be because she has not learnt to tell true from false. Despite the strange protestations of Laing and Esterton in the Preface to the second edition, there is good evidence in the text for inferring that this failure to learn must be explained in a way which involves reference to the behaviour of the parents and not simply by invoking some (undiscovered) organic deficiency in the patient, Maya. In short, Maya does not learn because she is unable to and she is unable to partly because of the way her parents behave.

Consider the following passage from Laing and Esterton's commentary on this case:

"An idea of reference that she [the daughter - TP] had was that something she could not fathom was going on between her parents, seemingly about her.

Indeed there was. When they were all interviewed together, her mother and father kept exchanging with each other a constant series of nods, winks, gestures, knowing smiles, so obvious to the observer that he commented on them after twenty minutes of the first such interview. They continued, however, unabated and denied.

The consequences, so it seems to us, of this failure by her parents to acknowledge the validity of similar comments by Maya, was that Maya could not know [my italics - TP] when she was perceiving or when she

was imagining things to be going on between her parents. These open yet unavowed non-verbal exchanges between father and mother were in fact quite public and perfectly obvious. Much of what could be taken to be paranoid about Maya arose because she mistrusted her own mistrust. She could not really believe that what she thought she saw going on was going on." (p.40)

My reading of this runs as follows. We learn to 'tell right from wrong' mainly from our parents. They are our chief moral authorities, from whom we learn not simply a list of particular rights and wrongs, but general rules of right and wrong (ethical principles) and, importantly, criteria for telling right from wrong where no general rule obviously applies or where it is a case of making an exception to a general rule. Of course, all of this, no doubt, goes on unconsciously.

Though there is no common phrase like 'learning to tell right from wrong' to express it, I suggest that we also learn, mainly from our parents, how to tell true from false - veridical from delusive perceptions, correct from incorrect statements. Here again we learn not just lists; we also assimilate criteria: we acquire an unconscious mastery of the criteria and the ways of applying them which indicate to us when, for example, we can legitimately say 'I know . . .' and when we can only legitimately say 'I believe . . .': when we have a right to be sure, when not, and so on. In other words, parents are our epistemological authorities, that is, authorities on questions like: what can we know? How can we know? How can we know that we know? When can we claim to know? and so on.

Maya, like most children, regarded her parents as epistemological ('cognitive' would be a possible alternative) authorities. In her case, as in all of the cases studied by Laing and Esterton, the degree of reliance she had to place on her parents was increased by the closed nature of the Abbott family. In addition, these families were often very Christian and this could add another reinforcement to the reliance on parents. For rejection of the parents as epistemological authorities could be construed as a breach of the rule: Honour thy Father, and thy Mother.

Maya's parents consistently deny the truth of her statements and thereby undermine any developing mastery of epistemological criteria and/or her perceptions themselves. She is thus disabled from achieving a cognitive mastery of the world. The growth of cognitive autonomy is inhibited or destroyed - it depends when and for how long these interactions continue. In the case of Maya the analysis is complicated by the fact that she was away from home from the age of 8 to the age of 14. In the absence of a clear knowledge of what happened in that period, my formulations of necessity vacillate a little. She remains epistemologically dependent on her parents, just as a child whose parents treated all cases of morality/immorality as unique and therefore failed to transmit any means of discrimin-